

Local & Regional Standards Boards

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEWS

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VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

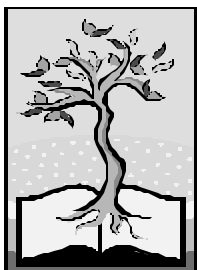
TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE:

- ♦ What is *"The Re-Licensing Handbook"* and have you received a copy?
- ♦ How Portfolios are Used
- ♦ Taking Charge of Your Learning
- ♦ Your Portfolio: Documenting Your Professional Development through Reflective Writing
- ♦ How to Use: A Checklist and Criteria for Portfolio Review for Local Standards Boards and Individual Educators
- ♦ Endorsement Revision Process



WHAT IS THE HANDBOOK?

The Vermont Re-licensing Process: A Reflection of Ongoing Professional Growth



The intent of this handbook is to encourage and support as educators and members of Local and Regional Standards Boards through the process of license renewal. While all licens-

ing is of necessity a regulatory function, we believe the desired result of educator re-licensing is also self-directed, transformational, continuous improvement on the part of each educator. This result can only happen through the promotion of a process requiring continuous self-assessment, reflection, and professional growth in relation to standards for what educators and their students should know and be able to do.

In Vermont, the culmination of the re-licensing process must be documented through a portfolio. While some have looked at the portfolio as just a product, or a collection of artifacts from professional development activities, we see great potential for meaningful professional development in the *process* of portfolio creation.

The foundation for a portfolio is an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP.) In this plan, individuals set goals for their own growth. The goals are based on the individual's reflections on his/her professional development needs. This plan must align to the Five Standards for Vermont Educators. The plan must also connect to student achievement based on Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities, as well as to their school's Action Plan and other school improvement efforts. The IPDP also contains evidence of professional development activities in subject areas related to each endorsement.

The handbook begins with basic principles concerning connections among professional development and educator quality, school improvement, and student learning. This is followed by an historical perspective of Vermont's re-licensing system, as well as by a view of evolving perceptions of professional development nationwide. Next, we begin the first of a number of reflective exercises

and other information to help you assess your own connections to things you will need to consider as you write your own Individual Professional Development Plan and complete your portfolio process (for example, student performance data and the Five Standards for Vermont Educators). Finally, before we present the Portfolio and IPDP development section, we discuss the importance of transitioning to self-directed learning and its relationship to adult learning.

Throughout the entire handbook, we have made an effort to support your reflection on each issue. We rarely have time to stop and think about our practices! What we know about adult learning tells us this may be one of the most useful ways for us to not only transition to new ideas, but also to undergo transformations in our personal and professional lives.

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How Portfolios are Used

Teacher educators at colleges and universities initiated the idea of using portfolios for reflective self-assessment for their students. Teacher portfolios were initially conceived to address the development of undergraduate and graduate students working toward professional licensing as classroom teachers.

In 1994, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards began to examine “What Teachers Should Know and be Able to Do.” They suggested the use of portfolios as a methodology for gathering evidence of what accomplished teachers know and are able to do.

During the early 1990’s, at the same time Vermont’s re-licensing system was being developed, little was written about the use of teacher portfolios for professional development. Student portfolios were, however, slowly becoming accepted as an authentic assessment alternative for reading and writing in elementary schools, and for writing across the curriculum in secondary schools.



The foundation for a relicensure portfolio is an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP). In this plan, individuals set goals for their own growth. The goals are based on the individual’s reflections on his/her professional development needs. This plan must align to the Five Standards for Vermont Educators. The plan must also connect to student achievement based on Vermont’s Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities., as well as to their school’s Action Plan and other school improvement efforts. The portfolio documents professional development activities and how the new learning impacts the educator’s practice and student learning.

The Professional Development Workgroup is working with IBM to develop an electronic portfolio that would simplify the relicensure process.

Taking Charge of Your Learning

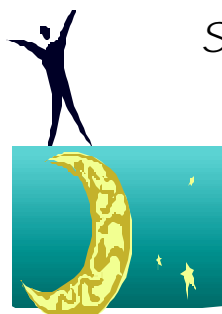
The portfolio's strong connection with how adults learn makes it a good process for documenting and encouraging that learning. Adults desire autonomy and self-direction, leading them to an ongoing process of self-construction as they discover gaps between where they are and where they want to be. (Tennant and Pogson 1995) The portfolio links educators' professional development to prior and current experiences, and allows them to reflect on transitions and transformations in their professional practice.

“Creating...portfolios requires systematic self-assessment and allows teachers to experience the power of their reflective thing—think which can...result in better ways of teaching.”

(Wilcox and Tomei, 1999)

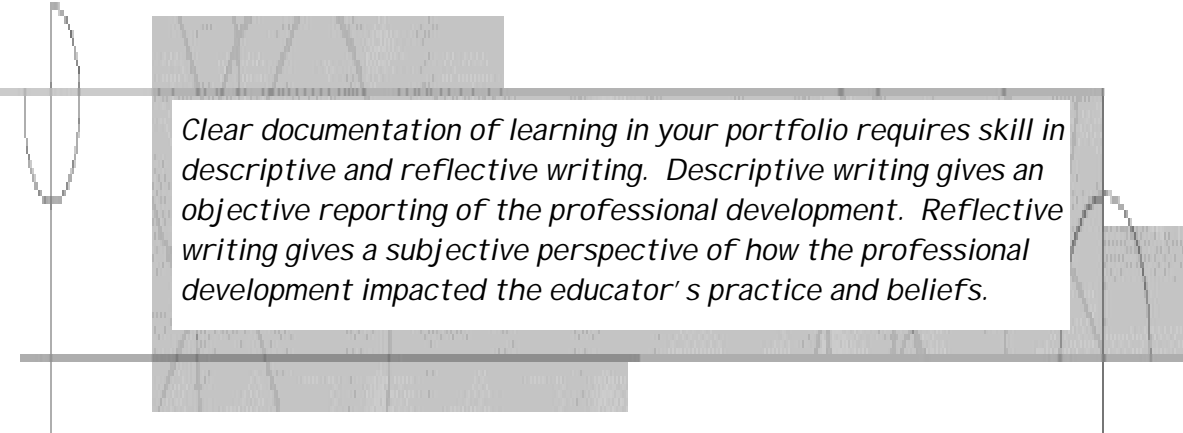


*People learn what is personally meaningful to them.
People learn when they accept challenging but achievable goals.
Learning is developmental.
Individuals learn differently.
People construct new knowledge by building on their current knowledge.
Much learning occurs through social interaction.
People need feedback to learn.
Successful learning involves use of strategies—which are also learned.*



Ron Brandt, Research on Learning, ASCD

YOUR PORTFOLIO: DOCUMENTING YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH REFLECTIVE WRITING



Clear documentation of learning in your portfolio requires skill in descriptive and reflective writing. Descriptive writing gives an objective reporting of the professional development. Reflective writing gives a subjective perspective of how the professional development impacted the educator's practice and beliefs.

To develop a meaningful portfolio, you've been asked to collect, connect and reflect on your professional development experiences, and select some that demonstrate knowledge, skills, understandings, experiences, and new learning.

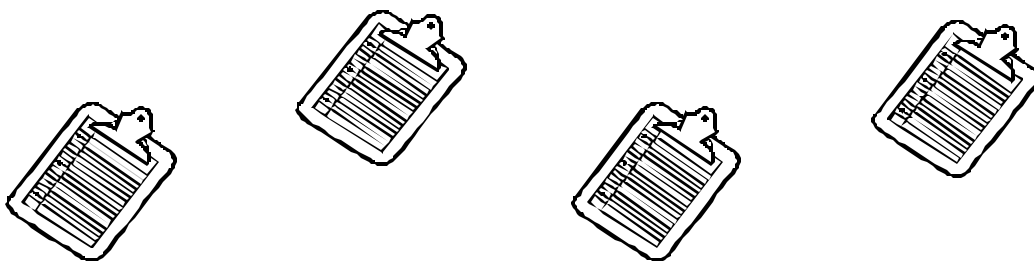
Once you've described the professional development experience, it's time for reflection. When you reflect on your learning, the chances are greatly increased that you will retain what you've learned, expand your practices, and even continuously grow in your professional and personal lives.

Steps or questions you might ask yourself when reflecting:

- What did I learn from this experience?
- How have my practices changed as a result?
- How did it impact student learning?
- Did it generate a desire for additional learning?
- If no, why not?
- Is further learning required?
- Is this an opportunity for follow-up, coaching, practice?
- If yes, how proficient am I?
- What might I do to increase proficiency?
- How might I share this with others?

HOW LOCAL STANDARDS BOARDS USE A CHECKLIST AND CRITERIA FOR PORTFOLIO REVIEW

- ⇒ Find the required components listed in the checklist.
- ⇒ Review the educator's portfolio to be sure each criteria for documentation or evidence of new learning is met.
- ⇒ Use the rubric provided to determine if each standard is met.
- ⇒ Discuss the educator's self-assessment of their rubric and compare with your review.



HOW EDUCATORS CAN USE A CHECKLIST AND CRITERIA FOR PORTFOLIO REVIEW

- ⇒ Match the checklist and criteria with your own portfolio.
- ⇒ Rate your own standard of evidence using the rubric provided.
- ⇒ Compare your rubric with your Local Standards Board review.
- ⇒ List your notes of evidence to discuss the Local Standards Board.



Checklist and Criteria for Portfolio Review

Educator _____ Date _____

LSB/ RSB Reviewer(s) _____

The portfolio contains the following components, required by Vermont Standards Board of Professional Educators (VSBPE)

_____ Personal information – name, school, teaching or administrative context, year

_____ Completed State Department of Education License Renewal Form

_____ Table of Contents

_____ Copy of current license and, if applicable, copies of any valid licenses or credentials required by the endorsement

_____ Completed IPDP and amendments

_____ Evidence of a minimum of nine re-licensing credits related to the knowledge and performance standards of each endorsement and the IPDP goals.

_____ New Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) for the next re-licensing period

Quality indicators for each of the Five Standards and Sixteen Principles for Vermont Educators are listed in the booklet Five Standards for Vermont Educators. The educator compiling the portfolio, as well as the L/RSB reviewer, should be familiar with these quality indicators.

Criteria for the documentation or evidence of new learning showing how each of the Five Standards and Sixteen principles for Vermont Educators and the IPDP goals have been met follows.

1. Learning

Each Vermont educator is knowledgeable about the standards for his/her professional endorsement(s). Each educator continues to acquire new learning in the content of his/her endorsement(s) and reflects this new learning in professional practice.

Little or No Evidence	Some Evidence	Clear Evidence
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Notes

2. Professional Knowledge

Each Vermont educator continues to acquire knowledge in best practices in teaching and the learning process, so as to improve Learning Opportunities for all students.

Little or No Evidence	Some Evidence	Clear Evidence
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Notes:

3. Colleagueship

Each Vermont educator works collaboratively with colleagues at local, state, and/or national levels to improve student learning through implementation of national professional standards, Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities, district goals, and school goals and/or action plans.

Little or No Evidence	Some Evidence	Clear Evidence
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Notes:

4. Advocacy

Each Vermont educator works to improve the educational health of Vermont learners, and promotes fairness and equity for all students and members of the educational community. The educator engages the family and the community in partnerships to promote student learning.

Little or No Evidence	Some Evidence	Clear Evidence
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Notes:

5. Accountability

Each Vermont educator carries out professional responsibilities ethically. Each educator demonstrates professional growth over time in each of the Five Standards for Vermont Educators and in the competencies for his/her endorsement(s). This growth is documented through a professional portfolio that includes evidence of rigorous professional development, reflective practice, and adaptation of practice to improve student learning. In addition, a portion of each educator's IPDP and professional portfolio is connected to his/her school's initiatives for improving student learning.

Little or No Evidence	Some Evidence	Clear Evidence
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Notes:

Other Indicators

6. A narrative accompanies each piece of supporting documentation addressing IPDP goals. The narrative describes the activity, reflects on it, and connects it to goals, action plans and student achievement.

Little or No Evidence	Some Evidence	Clear Evidence
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Notes:

7. IPDP goals for the new licensure period are written based on the reflection and analysis made during the portfolio process. Student achievement and school initiatives are embedded in the reflective process.

Little or No Evidence	Some Evidence	Clear Evidence
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Notes:

Endorsement Revision Process



Approximately 3 years ago, the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators charged the Department of Education to review, update, and revise the 40 plus endorsements in light of the fact that they had not been revised in many years and were not reflecting the current national standards or Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities.

The endorsement revision process to date has involved approximately 400 educators in the fields of the specific endorsements. The workgroups have been comprised of teachers, administrators, higher education faculty, and several agencies, depending on the endorsement. Individuals with expertise and experience in each endorsement were invited to participate in the work.

The process used for revising or creating the endorsements was as inclusive as we could make it. At the first meeting of each endorsement group, the national standards were used as resources for our work. Alignment with national standards in the field, National Board Standards and Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities determined our focus and as such, needed to make certain that the educator competencies were in sync with the gains that are being expected of our students. The proposed endorsements are stated as outcomes, rather than looking at course or credit counting, and with that, came the knowledge and performance standards in each—what the educator should know and be able to do in the particular content area. The objective has been to put forward competencies that are comprehensive, reasonable, and reflect current best practices.



The two educational technology endorsements are new. They began as a proposal by the VITA-Learn organization and the work was focused around this proposal and developed from there. Two other new endorsements are Teacher of the Blind or Visually Impaired and Teacher of the Deaf or Hard of Hearing which both have unique proficiencies that are required in the education of students with those challenges. The remainder are revisions of existing endorsements.

Next Steps

The endorsement competencies are policies and not regulations—the only part of each endorsement that is regulation is the authorizing statement which is in italics at the beginning of each endorsement. the authorizing statements define what the holder of the endorsement can do, and they must be approved by the State Board of Education and the Legislature. Formal public hearings on the regulations are required by law. The endorsement competencies are policies, therefore, public hearings are not required. However, the Department of Education and the VSBPE wanted to gather as much feedback as possible from the field and, as a result, a number of public comment sessions were held around the state.

The comments that the Department of Education receives both for the regulations and for the endorsements will be summarized and all comments will be shared with the Vermont Standards Board of Professional Educators. The VSBPE will vote to adopt any of the endorsements, with or without revisions. The summary report will also be a public document.

